

Enhancing Miri's Image As A New Tourist Destination Through The Media : The Case of Malaysia

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The present study seeks to examine the image of Miri as a new tourist destination in Malaysia and explores the potential of media to enhance the image of Miri as a tourist destination. It adopts a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches as developed by Echtner and Ritchie (1991). A sample of 354 tourists was collected at various strategic places. In addition to a set of pre-developed Likert scale questionnaire, respondents were asked to describe the unique images of Miri. The study revealed the potential for Miri to become a truly resort city. 72.8% of the tourists would recommend their friends/relatives to visit Miri and 76.5% of the tourists ranked Miri favorably compared to their previous vacation destination. However, only about 31% of the tourists discovered Miri through various media channels such as travel books/guides, tourism exhibition, newspaper/TV adverts and TV documentaries. Miri was considered as a 'shopping paradise', friendly, beautiful, relaxing, and the gateway to Borneo's national parks and experience. Its weaknesses, however, were the lack of interesting events, unique architecture and historical buildings, inadequate tourist information and the service level of the Visitors' Information Centre, and the need to improve accessibility to Miri. Among the unique landmarks highlighted were the Mulu/Niah caves, Lambir National Parks, Curtin campus, Boulevard Shopping Complex and the public parks.

Introduction

Miri was proclaimed as a city on 20 May 2005. As Miri achieves the city status, there is a greater need for it to be positioned as a unique tourist destination in this region to further fuel its growth - in line with the objectives set by the state, local city council and the Sarawak Tourism Board (STB). Since its declaration as a city in May, a major local newspaper (Borneopost) constantly reported on increasing efforts to promote tourism in Miri.

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News reports related to tourism often dealt with issues of environmental and cultural preservation, tourism marketing efforts, issues on increasing the numbers of direct flights and the promotion of annual city activities such as the 'Borneorace' yachting competition, 'Miri International Jazz Festival', the 'Miri Mayfest,' and the recently launched Sarawak tourism campaign/ tagline, 'Sarawak More than a Paradise!' (Joseph, 2005; Raphael, 2005; Ringgit 2005 and Wong, 2005). In a Borneopost article dated 12 December 2005, the Second Finance Minister, Dato Sri Wong Soon Koh states that the rebranding exercise "was to reinforce its efforts, enthusiasm and drive in developing the states tourism sector" ("Board launches new," 2005).

In line with the city and state's tourism focus, and the rising competition/ choice of tourist destinations at a global scale, the assessment and development of an appropriate destination image for Miri as Resort City is crucial and important. To create an image that is unique in this region, it is important to understand tourists' perception of Miri as a holiday destination and its impact on efforts to market Miri and its unique Borneo experience (Choi, Chan and Wu, 1999). A research was conducted in March, 2005, two months before Miri was declared a city, to examine tourists' image of Miri as a new tourist destination in Malaysia and to gain insights on the potential use of media to enhance the image of Miri as a tourist destination.

Destination Image - Influencing Perception

For the purpose of the research, 'destination image' is defined as "the perceptions of individual destination attributes and the holistic impression made by the destination... consisting of functional characteristics, concerning the more tangible aspects of the destination, and psychological characteristics, concerning the more intangible aspects" (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, p.8). The concept of 'destination image' has been widely acknowledged to affect the tourist's subjective perception, his/her buying behaviour and destination choice (Chen and Hsu, 2000; Qu, Li and Chu, 2000; Kozak, 2001; Seddighi and Theocharous, 2002). In view of the impact of an individual's subjective perception on their choice of tourist destination, the media offer huge potential in influencing perception (Reeves, 1993).

In order to boost or fully realise Miri Resort City's tourism potential - as part of the unique Borneo experience – there is a need to engage in continuous research to understand visiting tourist' destination image of Miri and in relation to this, explore the potential role of media in enhancing Miri's attraction as a tourist destination.

Specifically, destination image should include people's perceptions of the destination's attributes, as well as more holistic impressions. Distinctions should also be made between those image characteristics that are directly observable or measurable (functional) and those that are less tangible or difficult to observe (psychological). Moreover, images of destinations can range from those perceptions based on common functional and psychological traits to those based on more unique features or feelings. The intangible and experiential nature of tourism activities means that tourists use both holistic impressions and psychological factors to select the destination of their choice. As destination images are formed before visitors decide to come to Miri,

media plays important roles to influence perception of these images of Miri, especially for new tourists. Hence, this study adopted both the quantitative and qualitative approaches, as developed by (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991) to define a comprehensive image for Miri. While the quantitative approach allows for statistical analysis of attributes, the qualitative approach provides opportunities to describe the tourists' holistic impressions as well as the unique features and feelings associated with a place. While the study did not directly address the media influence on tourists' image destination, it provides data that clearly presents a need to further research on the potential role of media in enhancing Miri's image as a resort city.

Research Objectives

The primary objective of the research is to ascertain the image of Miri as a tourist destination and to explore the potential of media to enhance the image of Miri as a tourist destination. The study identifies images of Miri to be promoted aggressively by the media, including the Internet. It attempts to answer the following research questions:-

1. Why do tourists select Miri as a destination?
2. How do tourists rate their Miri experience?

Methodology

The survey instrument was developed based on the previous research by Echtner and Ritchie (1993) and after consultation and feedback from various interest groups from the Miri tourism industry such as travel agencies, hotels and the Sarawak Tourism Board. There are four open-ended questions to understand why tourists choose Miri as a tourist destination, three of which were adapted directly from Echtner and Ritchie (1993). These questions capture the holistic and unique components of Miri. The three questions are:

- What images or characteristics come to your mind when you think of Miri as a vacation destination;
- How would you describe the atmosphere or ambience that you would expect to experience while visiting Miri?
- List any distinctive or unique tourist attractions that you can think of in Miri.

There are also 40 Likert statements designed to measure the functional and psychological attributes of Miri. The statements/questions require the tourists to state the degree of importance for the various attributes of a tourist destination. They are also required to rate the extent their Miri experience satisfy their expectations towards these attributes by selecting Strongly did not meet expectation (-2); Did not meet expectation (-1); Meet Expectation (0); Strongly Met Expectation (1) to Very Strongly Met Expectation (2). The attributes include items on leisure and amenities (14 items); the quality of services provided by the airlines, Miri Airport/Customs, immigration department, taxis, public transportation, telecommunication services, the Visitors' Information Centre and travel and tour agencies in Miri (8 items) as well as the people and the place category (18 items).

Data collection and analysis

For the purpose of this study, tourists are defined as all those who visit Miri for leisure purposes for at least 1 day but less than 1 year. The samples of tourists were selected during the February to March 2005 at the Miri Airport departure hall and some public places such as shopping centers, hotels, etc. A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed. However, only 345 questionnaires were usable. For quantitative research, the method of data collection included face-to-face interviews in which respondents can choose to fill in the questionnaire themselves or the interviewer will assist in recording responses into the questionnaire. A screening process was carried out at the end of each day during the data collection period to filter out invalid questionnaires. The interviewers are Curtin students who are well trained and familiar on the research objectives and also the items of the questionnaire. The data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), a software package for statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage analysis were used to answer the research questions.

Sampling

The Convenient Sampling method was employed whereby the sampling frame was all visitors waiting at the departure hall at the Miri Airport and also tourists found in public places such as hotels, shopping centers etc. Convenient sampling refers to the procedure of obtaining respondents who are the most conveniently available to obtain a large number of completed questionnaires quickly and economically.

A focus group interview with representatives from different interest groups from the tourism industry such as travel agencies, hotels and the Sarawak Tourism Board was held prior to the data collection process to seek feedback and refine the research objectives and also to establish the important information to be obtained from the study.

Findings and Discussion

Respondents' Profile

Table 1: Demographic profile of the tourists (n= 345)

Gender	Frequency	%
Male	185	54
Female	149	43
Age Group		
15-19	44	13
20-29	149	43
30-39	79	23
40-49	48	14
50-59	22	6
Marital Status		
Single	185	54
Married	124	36
Nationality		
Malaysian	211	61
Australian	7	2
Bruneian	24	7
British	18	5
Indian	8	2
Malaysian State		
Sarawak	127	37
Sabah	56	16
Negeri Sembilan	15	4
Perak	6	2
Johor	10	3

As shown in Table 1, most of the tourists belong to the 20-29 age group (43%) and many of which are single (54%). This implies that Miri has to provide tourism products, which satisfy these groups of young tourists a majority of which are single. Miri also captures mainly Malaysian tourists (37%) with most coming from Sarawak.

Table 2: How did you get to know about Miri? (%)

Promotional Item	Yes	No
Business Dealing	22	66
Friends & relatives	57	31
Travel Books/Guides	10	78
Travel Agents/Tour Operators	5	83
Tourism Exhibition	6	82
Previous Visit to Malaysia	8	80
Newspaper/TV adverts	8	80
TV Documentaries	7	81

Table 2 shows that 57% of the tourists discovered Miri through friends and relatives. It goes to suggest that 'word-of-mouth' from tourists are important towards promoting Miri and the roles that Mirians can play in ensuring that tourists enjoyed their stay and have a good feeling so that they are willing to recommend Miri to their friends and relatives. An interesting finding is that 72.8% of the tourists would recommend their friends/relatives to visit Miri.

What images come to the tourists' mind when they think of Miri as a vacation destination?

The tourists stated some positive images of Miri such as beautiful beaches; gateway to the Mulu and Niah national parks and the famous virgin forest; Miri is a small and clean city with beautiful landscapes; Miri is an oil town image of Borneo; Miri is a peaceful and relaxing city; Miri is a shopping haven and Miri's people are friendly. These are the positive images of Miri that need to be highlighted in marketing campaigns about Miri. However, we need to be aware of some of the negative images about Miri as perceived by the tourists such as Miri is not attractive enough, limited shopping centres and not many tourist spots in Miri.

How would the tourists describe the atmosphere/ambience that they would expect to experience while visiting Miri?

Generally, Miri is perceived as having a beautiful, natural and friendly environment; is clean and peaceful; is exciting, fun and have lots of exciting places of interest and also a variety of food; Miri's weather is hot and has a relaxed atmosphere. The authorities need to manage the perceptions of the tourists that Miri is exciting, fun and have lots of exciting places of interest and also a variety of food. This study has found that the "variety of things to see and do" and the "interesting events and festivals" attributes are extremely important to the tourists. However, only about 35% of them are satisfied with these attributes after visiting Miri. In this aspect, the authorities have lined up a number of international events in 2006 such as the international jazz festival and the international yachting competition to bring more tourists to Miri and also to boost Miri's image as a resort city.

The tourists’ opinion of the distinctive and unique attractions in Miri

Among the tourists spots highlighted by the tourists, which should be aggressively promoted in Miri’s tourism campaigns are the new Miri Airport, the Boulevard Shopping Complex, the Miri City Fan, the Crocodile Farm, the Mulu and Niah National Parks, the Lambir National Parks and the Grand Old Lady.

The Tourists’ Miri Experience

Table 3(a) below shows the percentage of tourists who perceived that the respective attributes are moderately important and very important to them as well as the percentage of tourists who perceived that their expectations towards those attributes were met. ***Table 3(a): the tourists’ Miri experience towards the leisure and amenities attributes***

Leisure and Amenities Attributes	% Expectations Met	% who agree that the attribute is moderately important and very important
Interesting tourist spots/attractions	80.9	72
Restful and relaxing places	47.8	74
National parks around Miri	50.7	73
Variety of things to see and do	38.8	71
Quality of hotels/accommodation	52.5	75.6
Quality of food in restaurants	49.6	76.8
Quality of beaches	38.3	67.8
Shopping centers	53.6	94.5
Interesting events and festivals	35.1	90.4
Variety of souvenirs and unique products	33.6	86.1
Variety of food and restaurants available in Miri	48.4	94.5
Nightlife/night entertainment	42.6	86.7
Public gardens and parks in Miri	44.1	87.8
Water sports	26.1	83.5

All the attributes were perceived as important. The authorities and the Miri people should attempt to improve the satisfaction ratings for the attributes whereby 50% or less of the expectations of the tourists were met. The tourists are expecting Miri to offer these important attributes before they are willing to recommend Miri to their friends and relatives (72.5% of them would) and also to make another trip to Miri. On the other hand, there were some important attributes whereby Miri could meet the tourists’ expectations. These attributes should be capitalized and constitute the unique features of Miri i.e. interesting tourist spots, national parks, quality of hotels and shopping centers. In this study, the tourists have rated highly on some interesting tourist spots in Miri such as the beaches, Mulu and Niah national parks, the Lambir National Park, Curtin campus, shopping centers and public parks. These tourist spots are rated as the best places visited in Miri.

Table 3(b): the tourists' Miri experience towards the quality of services provided by various parties related to tourism in Miri

Attributes	% Expectation Met	% who agree that the attribute is moderately important and very important
Airlines	53.3	97.4
Miri Airport/Customs	57.4	96.8
Immigration department	45.5	95.4
Taxis/Public Transportation	41.7	94.5
Internet/Telecommunications	38.8	94.5
Visitors' Information Centre	31.9	93.9
Travel agents/Tour Operators in Miri	36.5	93

It seems that the services provided by the airlines, airports and customs authorities were satisfactory. However, the immigration department, public transport providers, telecommunication providers, employees at the Miri Visitors' Information Centre as well as the travel operators need to improve their services further as the satisfactory level is below 50%.

Table 3(c), tourists' Miri experience towards the people and the place attributes

Attributes	% Expectation Met	% who agree that the attribute is moderately important and very important
The Miri people are friendly and helpful	50.4	97.7
Miri is a safe place to visit	43.2	96.2
The traders (e.g. taxi drivers, shopkeepers etc.) are honest	35.7	95.1
Miri offers a fun environment	36.2	95.4
There are no language barriers with the Miri people	44.9	95.1
Transportation for getting around Miri	42.6	96.5
Cleanliness of Miri	41.4	95.7
Greenness of Miri	48.1	95.7
Products and services are value for money	39.4	95.4
Miri has pleasant weather/climate	38.3	92.8
Miri is accessible to neighbouring countries and major destinations around the world	42.9	94.8
Miri offers a modern and dynamic environment	36.8	93.6

Unique lifestyles and customs of the local people	41.7	93.9
Unique architecture and historical buildings	29.3	91.9
Miri is a cosmopolitan city	32.5	90.1
There are many packaged tours available	31.6	89.9
Tourist information are easily available	31	91.9
Miri is comparatively a cheaper place to spend holidays	39.1	95.4

The findings as shown in Table 2(c) suggest that the tourists were satisfied that the Miri people are friendly and helpful. However, all the other attributes need to be improved and enhanced as they are rated as important attributes influencing their choice of Miri as a tourist destination.

Why do tourists select Miri as a tourist destination?

Basically, most tourists came to Miri as Miri is perceived as a small but beautiful, natural, relaxing, peaceful & clean city and gateway to the national parks, a shopping haven and has unique oil town image.

Results of factor analysis

The results are showed in Table 4 below:-

Table 4: Factor analysis of image items

Factor name and items	Mean	S.D.	Factor Loading	Alpha	Eigen value
Factor 1: Cost of living, local culture and weather	0.34			0.8846	16.341
Products and services are value for money	0.35	0.943	0.72		
Miri is comparatively a cheaper place to spend holidays	0.35	1.137	0.693		
Unique architecture and historical buildings	0.20	0.941	0.679		
Unique lifestyles and customs of the local people	0.50	0.888	0.650		
Miri has pleasant weather/climate	0.28	1.026	0.611		
Miri is a cosmopolitan city	0.24	0.960	0.596		
Miri offers a modern and dynamic environment	0.31	0.950	0.576		
Miri is accessible to neighbouring countries and major destinations around the world	0.49	1.049	0.539		

Factor 2: Leisure and tourist amenities/activities	0.38			0.8273	2.043
Public gardens and parks in Miri	0.55	0.968	0.657		
Interesting events and festivals	0.32	0.973	0.647		
National parks around Miri	0.65	0.907	0.590		
Shopping centers	0.65	0.958	0.581		
Quality of beaches	0.21	1.159	0.539		
Water sports	0.00	1.028	0.521		
Interesting tourist spots/attractions	0.47	0.866	0.504		
Variety of souvenirs and unique products	0.18	0.960	0.477		
Factor 3: Services of services provided by various authorities related to tourism	0.55			0.8703	1.888
Miri Airport/Customs	0.69	0.931	0.793		
Airlines	0.62	0.952	0.731		
Immigration department	0.53	0.934	0.725		
Taxis/Public Transportation	0.35	0.913	0.622		
Factor 4: Food paradise, quality of hotels and nightlife/night entertainment	0.48			0.8342	1.745
Quality of food in restaurants	0.54	1.035	0.725		
Variety of food and restaurants available in Miri	0.50	1.031	0.640		
Quality of hotels/accommodation	0.69	0.878	0.608		
Nightlife/night entertainment	0.49	1.017	0.581		
Variety of things to see and do	0.33	1.002	0.475		
Internet/Telecommunications	0.33	0.974	0.418		
Factor 5: Tourist information	0.31			0.8492	1.312
Tourist information are easily available	0.25	0.972	0.688		
Travel agents/Tour Operators in Miri	0.36	0.904	0.680		
Visitors' Information Centre	0.28	0.897	0.646		
There are many packaged tours available	0.34	0.941	0.644		

Factor 6: Safe place, honesty of traders and hospitality of the local people	0.36					0.8059	1.175
Miri is a safe place to visit	0.33	1.140	0.699				
The traders (e.g. taxi drivers, shopkeepers etc.) are honest	0.23	1.003	0.652				
The Miri people are friendly and helpful	0.54	1.007	0.593				
Miri offers a fun environment	0.33	0.909	0.416				
Factor 7: Language barriers and transportation	0.46					0.6914	1.041
There are no language barriers with the Miri people	0.54	1.035	0.604				
Transportation for getting around Miri	0.37	1.003	0.574				

The 40 Likert statements were explored by principal component factor analysis and varimax rotation, which resulted in a seven-factor solution (see Table 4). The purpose of factor analysis was to combine the statements into smaller set of factors that were deemed to represent the image dimensions of Miri. The items with factor loadings less than 0.4 were dropped from further analysis. The internal consistency of each factor was examined by the Cronbach's alpha tests. All the alpha coefficients were above 0.65, which means that high correlation existed between the items.

Factor loadings were used to assign a name to each factor. Specifically, items with higher loadings were considered as important and as having greater influence on factor naming (Hair et al. 1995). Factor 1 is composed of 8 items relating to cost of living and local culture. 'products and services are value for money', 'Miri is comparatively a cheaper place to spend holidays', 'unique architecture and historical buildings', 'unique lifestyles and customs of the local people', and 'Miri has pleasant weather/climate' are examples of higher factor loading for this factor. Factor 2 is related to leisure and tourist amenities/activities. 'Public gardens and parks in Miri', 'interesting events and festivals' and 'national parks around Miri' are some items with higher factor loadings for this factor. Factor 3 comprises items related to services provided by various authorities related to tourism while factor 4 comprises items related to quality and variety of food, quality of hotels and nightlife/night entertainment. Factor 5 relates to the availability of tourists' information provided by travel agents, the Visitors Information Centre. Factor 6 includes items related to safe place, honesty of traders and hospitality of the local people while factor 7 relates to language barriers with the local people and transportation around Miri.

The summated means of all factors were above 0.40, which indicates that the tourists had a positive image of Miri. In particular Factor 3, ie. Services provided by various authorities related to the tourism industry such as the Miri Airport/Customs, airlines

and immigration department, had a mean score of 0.55 since the maximum mean score to reflect high satisfaction on meeting the expectations of the tourists is 2. In addition, tourists seemed to enjoy the unique lifestyles and customs of the local people (mean = 0.50) ; the public gardens and parks (mean = 0.55); national parks around Miri (mean = 0.65); shopping centers (mean=0.65); quality of food in restaurants (mean = 0.54); variety of food and restaurants (mean = 0.50); quality of hotels (mean = 0.69); the friendliness of the Miri people (mean = 0.54); and no language barriers with the local people (mean = 0.54).

The three continuums of destination image

The mean scores for functional and psychological attributes are presented in the upper part of Table 5 below. These include ratings for Miri Airport/Customs, national parks around Miri, good shopping centers, quality of hotels/accommodation , public gardens and parks in Miri which are above 0.50, indicating a positive image for Miri.

The functional and psychological holistic images are depicted in the middle part of the table. It seems that Miri is mainly regarded as a small and clean city with beautiful landscape and beaches as well as a shopping haven. Regarding the atmosphere and mood experienced in Miri, the famous virgin forest of the Mulu national parks, friendliness of the Miri people and peaceful and relaxing image of Miri seemed to be the norm.

The functional-psychological and common-unique components of destination image are shown in the lower part of the table. The Mulu and Niah national parks, the Miri City Fan, the Grand Old Lady, the Crocodile Farm and the sea horse statues around Miri ranked highest among the items. In addition, the oil town image and the peaceful and relaxing image of Miri were among the distinct destination images for Miri. Miri was also perceived as having some common functional features such as good shopping centers, good accessibility with other cities of the world, beautiful public parks and beaches. The city also has some unique psychological images such as ‘the Miri people are friendly and helpful’ and ‘there are no language barriers with the Miri people’.

Table 5: The attribute-holistic, functional-psychological and common-unique images of Miri

	3. Functional	(Mean/%)	3. Psychological	(Mean/%)
1. Attribute-Holistic			Unique lifestyles and customs of the local people	0.50
Attribute	Miri	0.69	Quality of food in restaurants	0.54
	Airport/Customs		Variety of food and restaurants available in Miri	0.50
	National parks around Miri	0.65	Quality of hotels/accommodation	0.69
	Good Shopping centers	0.65		

	Miri is accessible to neighbouring countries and major destinations around the world	0.49	Nightlife/night entertainment	0.49
	Public gardens and parks in Miri	0.55	The Miri people are friendly and helpful	0.54
			There are no language barriers with the Miri people	0.54
Holistic	Beautiful beaches	13.7%	Gateway to the Mulu and Niah national parks and the famous virgin forest	41.1%
	Miri is a shopping haven	14.5%	Miri people are friendly	25.8%
	Miri is a small and clean city with beautiful landscape	15.8%	Miri has an oil town image	5%
			Miri is a peaceful and relaxing city	15.5%
2. Unique-Common Unique	Miri City Fan	45.8%		
	The Crocodile Farm	38.3%	Miri has an oil town image	5%
	Mulu and Niah National Parks	56.5%	Miri is a peaceful and relaxing city	15.5%
	Grand Old Lady	42..3%		
	Lots of sea horse statues around Miri	20.8%		
Common	Good Shopping centers	14.5%	The Miri people are friendly and helpful	25.8%
	Miri is accessible to neighbouring countries and major destinations around the world	15.5%	There are no language barriers with the Miri people	26.3%

Public gardens and parks in Miri	30.8%
Beautiful beaches	13.7%
Miri is a small and clean city with beautiful landscape	15.8%

Conclusion

This study contributes to the understanding of the competitive advantage of Miri as a tourist destination by combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to give a comprehensive view on the image of Miri. The attributes identified will assist marketers to identify Miri's market positioning while the holistic impressions will identify the unique symbols of Miri. The study also highlighted the unique destination images of Miri to be promoted through the media since about 72.8% of the tourists would recommend their friends/relatives to visit Miri. So while the percentage of the tourists who discovered Miri through various media channels is only about 31%, it does not imply that the media is ineffective in influencing tourists' destination image. The promotion of the destination images of Miri through the media may be more effective as marketers and policy makers have more control over the content of the images to be promoted to potential tourists compared to the promotion of the destination images of Miri through word of mouth. Further research will need to be conducted to determine the reasons behind why media tools such, travel books/guides, tourism exhibition, newspaper/TV adverts and TV documentaries are a weak source of promotion and to explore if this is in any way an outcome of the media's role in enhancing/ influencing the tourist's destination image or the lack of it. Future research should also take into account the Internet, as a new medium.

On a whole, the findings of this study indicates that Miri has great potential of offering a unique Borneo experience to tourists around the world, as Miri has a combination of nature, culture, adventure, good diving spots, petroleum science museum and the soon to be completed Miri marina which offers world class infrastructure and facilities to water sports lovers around the world. However, Miri can be a better resort city by creating more interesting and fun events/festivals, developing more tourist spots, improving the services at the Visitors' Information Centre, improving tourist information at strategic places which include informative road signs, creating attractive tour packages, reducing crime rate, ensuring efficient transportation system, no language

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barriers with the local people, enhancing cleanliness of Miri City, offering variety of food and restaurant, developing unique landmarks, ensuring products are value for money and improving accessibility to Miri from major destinations in the world. With the suggested improvements, the image of Miri can then be repackaged and promoted through the media to better capture potential tourists' destination image.

With the continuous support from the Miri people and Miri hosting many international events in years to come, it will be positioned as a unique tourist destination in this region. International events to be hosted by Miri Resort City in 2006 such as the 'International Jazz Festival' and the 'Borneorace International Yachting' competition will certainly bring more tourists to Miri and boost its image as a resort city.

Limitations

A number of limitations can be acknowledge to inform future research

- The survey was conducted over a short period of one month in March, 2005 ie. 2 months before Miri was declared a city and was bustling with activities. Thus, the respondents views would only be of those particular set of tourists and not representative of year round tourism.
- Measurements of tourists' image were limited to those currently visiting and exclude potential tourists.
- The satisfaction of tourist was based on the feelings after exposure to the destination (i.e. Miri).

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